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RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 9856
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PHUM](#) [PE](#)
SUBJECT: PERU REGIONAL/MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS: ALL POLITICS IS
(AGAIN) LOCAL

REF: A. LIMA 3693
[1](#)B. LIMA 2222

Sensitive but Unclassified. Please handle accordingly.

Summary:

[1](#)1. (SBU) Peru holds regional, provincial and district elections on November 19. Former presidential candidate Ollanta Humala's Peruvian Nationalist Party (PNP) has floundered and local interests have reasserted themselves. Voters appear apathetic and weary from the electoral season. President Alan Garcia has announced his eagerness to work with whomever wins, confident that the GOP's control over funds will keep Regional Presidents in line. Lima Mayor Luis Castaneda should cruise to a landslide re-election. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) On November 19, approximately 14,000 candidates will compete for 25 regional presidencies and for mayorships in 194 provinces and more than 1,800 districts. There are no expectations of significant problems or serious fraud. Voter interest in the elections is low, the result of too many candidates and an exhausting pair of elections in April and June.

Humala Flames Out

[1](#)3. (U) In the wake of radical, pro-Chavez presidential candidate Ollanta Humala's impressive showing in June (Ref B), many observers had feared that Humala's followers might sweep regional and municipal elections, particularly in his base area in the south. Such worries have proven unfounded as Humala's movement has floundered and local forces have reasserted themselves. Peru's combination of weak political parties and strong local and regional movements led by local caudillos presages continued political fragmentation at the local and regional level. Most regional presidents and provincial and district mayors will win elections with far less than 50 percent of the vote.

APRA Losing Ground: Garcia Unconcerned

[1](#)4. (U) APRA is not expected to win as many regional presidencies as they did in the last elections. (In 2002,

APRA won 12 of 25 regional presidencies.) Some polls show APRA likely to win only two regional presidencies and not doing particularly well in provincial and municipal races. President Garcia is reportedly unconcerned. He has made no effort to help APRA candidates, despite his high approval ratings. Some observers say Garcia would prefer to work with independent candidates -- particularly Regional Presidents who will depend on the central government for financing -- rather than suffer the fallout from underperforming APRA leaders.

¶5. (U) Cocaleros are fielding mayoral candidates for eight districts in Apurimac, the provinces of Huanta and La Mar, the Regional Presidency of Ayacucho and for several mayorships in the Apurimac and Ene River Valley (VRAE). The cocaleros are divided between those led by Nelson Palomino (VRAE), Ibuncio Morales (Monzon), and by other provincial leaders. These divisions should diminish their potential impact. The fight between Palomino and Morales has also eclipsed any influence that Ollanta Humala had in this sector.

Comment: Winners and Losers

¶6. (SBU) Despite general political apathy, Peru's regional/municipal elections will produce winners and losers.

--Lima Mayor Luis Castaneda should cruise to a landslide re-election. His closest competitor, evangelical pastor and National Restoration Party leader Humberto Lay, scores between 10-15 percent in most polls. All other candidates,

including those from APRA and Humala's PNP, maintain minimal support. Castaneda has solidified his base for a possible run at the Presidency in 2011. Lay is holding on to support that he carved out in the April first-round presidential elections.

--APRA has lost some ground in regional and municipal races. We think that President Garcia is putting the best face on this by professing unconcern. In the end, Garcia knows that he can keep Regional Presidents in check because the central government provides most of their budgets under decentralization.

--Ollanta Humala is the biggest loser in the entire process. His PNP has split from its former coalition partner, the Union por el Peru (UPP) Party, and has had problems fielding candidates in many areas. Compounding his difficulties, two weeks ago, Humala announced that he was forming a new political movement, GANA Peru (Win Peru), further confusing both his followers and observers.

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